

REMARKS

Claim Status

Applicants acknowledge the indication that claims 26-27 contain allowable subject matter. Claims 18-37 are pending, with claims 18 and 35 being independent. Claims 25-27 have been amended, where claims 26 and 27 have also been placed into independent form. The amendment to claim 25 corrects a typographical error in this claim, and is cosmetic only. No new matter has been added by way of the above amendments. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Objections based on Claim to Foreign Priority

As set forth on page 2, paragraph 2 of the Office Action "an English translation of the priority German application has not been received". In response to this statement, Applicants respectfully assert that the English translation of the priority German application was filed on June 13, 2004, along with the response to the Office Action of March 19, 2004. A stamped, self addressed postcard was also submitted therewith. However, it appears this postcard was not returned to the Office of the undersigned. As a result, Applicants are re-submitting herewith the English translation of the German priority application in order to advance prosecution of the present application.

Objections to the Disclosure

The disclosure has been objected to because of certain informalities. Specifically, the Examiner has stated that "In the brief description of drawings, 'Figure 2' and 'Figure 4' should be corrected to read as ---Figures 2a and 2b--- and ---Figures 4a and 4b--- respectively." In response to

this objection, Applicants have amended the specification in the manner suggested by the Examiner.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections to the disclosure are respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 18, 23-24, 30, 33, and 35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by EP 0884525. Applicants have carefully considered the Examiner's rejections, and the comments provided in support thereof, and respectfully disagree with the Examiner's analysis. For the reasons which follow, it is respectfully submitted that all claims of the present application distinguish the invention patentably over the cited reference.

The invention is directed to an illumination arrangement for use in transmitting light along an optical waveguide. The arrangement includes a multi-piece shell which defines a cavity that houses the waveguide, at least in the regions of which the light is to be guided (deflected). At least one of the shell elements includes an inner wall which reflects the light.

Set forth on page 3 of the Office Action is the statement that:

'525 discloses an illumination apparatus having an optical waveguide 17, at least one light source 22, a housing formed as a shell from a plurality of interconnected shell elements (Note Figs. 2,4) wherein shell walls are reflective walls.

With respect to the foregoing statement, the following is noted. Independent claim 18 calls for an illumination arrangement having, *inter alia*, an optical waveguide and a housing formed as a shell from a plurality of interconnected shell elements, wherein the shell elements have walls, and wherein at least one of the walls has a reflective internal surface. EP 0884525 fails to teach a housing with reflective walls, as set forth in independent claim 18. According to col. 3, lines 28-44 of EP 0884525, light extracting deformities or disruptions are provided in a thin, long panel 17 made of a transparent light conductive material. One function of the deformities is to act as

reflectors in order to extract light from the optical waveguide. EP 0884525 provides a detailed description of different types and shapes of such deformities (see col. 3, lines 33-54). As a result, the light of the optical waveguide in EP 0884525 is confined to the waveguide by internal reflections (e.g., see col. 3, lines 21-23 and 39-44), and a special surface pattern is necessary for coupling out light from the waveguide. As taught in this reference, this special pattern is arranged in the vicinity of objects to be illuminated, e.g. an LCD display or keypads on a keyboard (see col. 3, lines 23-27).

In contrast, the claimed invention eliminates the use of a special reflector that is formed as part of the optical waveguide, since the reflective surface recited in independent claim 18 is located on the walls of the shell element itself. In fact, EP 0884525 teaches away from the reflective sidewalls of a shell element, as required in claim 18, since the deformities of EP 0884525 serve as reflectors. Therefore, claim 18 is patentable over EP 0884525, and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are in order.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 19-22, 25, 28-29, 31-32, 34, 36, and 37 stand rejected under U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 0884525 in view of JP 10-188641. For the following reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all claims of the present application distinguish the invention patentably over the cited references.

Set forth on page 3-4 of the Office Action is a statement that:

'525 discloses an illumination apparatus . . . except for a second cavity. '641 is cited to show this feature. "641 discloses a second cavity with circuit components in it, a second light source and over a bridge (Note figs. 2 and 4). The snap fit structure and convex wall would be within the level of ordinary skill in the art. Consequently, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary [skill] in the art at

the time the invention was made to modify the device of '525 to have included a second light source other side of the bridge away from the first light source as taught by '641 to increase light incident efficiency. The method claims recited for using the apparatus are an inherent use of the apparatus '525 in view of '641 and are rejected on the same grounds. One of ordinary skill would find it inherent that the apparatus of '525 modified with '641 operates in the functional manner claimed by applicant.

With respect to the foregoing, the following is noted. JP 10-188641 discloses a surface illumination and liquid crystal display device. However, JP 10-188641 fails to cure the above-discussed deficiencies of EP 0884525. Specifically, JP 10-188641 also fails to teach or suggest a housing with reflective sidewalls, as set forth in independent claim 18. As a result, claim 18 is patentable over the combination of EP0884525 and JP10-188641, and action by the Examiner to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Independent method claim 35 includes features corresponding to those of apparatus claim 18 discussed above as being the basis for allowability thereof over the prior art. Accordingly, claim 35 is likewise patentable over the combination of applied references.

In view of the patentability of independent claims 18, 26, 27 and 35, for the reasons set forth above, dependent claims 19-25, 28-34 and 36-37 are all patentable over the prior art.

Conclusion

Based on all of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in proper condition for allowance. Prompt and favorable action to this effect and early passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

Should the Examiner have any comments, questions, suggestions or objections, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned in order to facilitate reaching a resolution of any outstanding issues.

It is believed that no fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the present application. However, if any fees or charges are required at this time, they may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,

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